

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Thomas Alva Edison Visiting Scholars Program
United States Patent and Trademark Office

The USPTO seeks new proposals from scholars in intellectual property, innovation, economics and related fields for the Thomas Alva Edison Visiting Scholars Program. USPTO is expanding its existing program as part of steps the [White House announced on June 4, 2013 to develop](#) “more robust data and research on the issues bearing on abusive litigation” in relation to high tech patents.

About the Program

The Edison Scholars Program enlists the services of distinguished academic researchers to study intellectual property (IP) issues that further the agency's mission and the public interest. Scholars devote up to six months of full time service to the agency, or up to a year if part-time. Materials produced by Visiting Scholars may be published or released, subject to USPTO clearance procedures.

Research Topics

Proposed research areas should include topics related to USPTO examination, adjudication or market forces that may foster abusive litigation in the area of high tech patents.

Topics of particular interest could include:

- A study of factors that most influence early resolution of patent litigations.
- How are new standards for post grant proceedings established under the recent America Invents Act being implemented and what impact are these proceedings having on patent quality and litigation? (Proposals may cover any or all of them: *ex parte* reexamination, inter partes review, post grant review, and the transitional program for covered business methods.)
- How do the various post patent grant proceedings (e.g., reissue, reexamination, reviews, patent validity trials, ITC actions, etc) overlap, and how do the different costs and incentives of these proceedings influence their usage among patent applicants and compare to validity challenges in district court litigation?
- How can the USPTO best examine trends in patent infringement litigation, including the types of patents and issues in dispute? How can the USPTO effectively use this information to improve the quality of issued patents? (see recent GAO Report, [GAO-13-465](#), Aug. 22, 2013)
- What are the potential benefits, costs, and challenges to fee shifting in patent litigation?

These topics are non-exhaustive. We welcome other relevant research proposals.

Funding

Visiting scholars are financially compensated for their time, either directly with temporary employment contracts or through reimbursement to their home institution. The mechanism and rates will be worked out by mutual agreement with each visiting scholar.

Subject to available funds, the USPTO anticipates supporting reasonable amounts of travel to and from the agency for visiting scholars to interact with personnel and conduct their research.

How to Apply

Interested scholars are encouraged to submit a two-page proposal that includes a clear statement of the research question; a brief discussion of the methodologies to be used; a description of any data required (both existing datasets and those yet to be developed); and any other relevant information.

Proposals should be submitted with a CV by email to edison scholar@uspto.gov. The USPTO will consider applications on a rolling basis. Please direct any questions to edison scholar@uspto.gov.